

HOOVER POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/01/2005	REVISION DATE: 11/30/2005	SECTION: 900.02
SUBJECT: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS - Guidelines for Officer-Involved Shooting		APPROVED BY: Nicholas C. Derzis, Chief of Police

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the investigation of officer-involved shooting incidents. These incidents will be investigated with the utmost thoroughness, professionalism, and impartiality to determine if officer actions conform to the law and this agency's policy on the use of deadly force.

A. On-Scene Responsibilities:

Officers involved at the scene of a shooting incident shall take those measures that are reasonably possible and appropriate to protect their safety and to preserve evidence essential to the investigation. This includes the following actions, undertaken in the order deemed appropriate:

1. Ensure that the threats to officer safety and the safety of others are over.
2. Secure and separate suspects.
3. Relay information on fleeing suspects to communications and other field units and work with them to establish a containment area.
4. Request a supervisor and additional backup, emergency medical services, if necessary, and any other assistance required immediately.
5. If injured, administer emergency first aid to oneself first if possible. Then, administer basic first aid to suspects and others, as necessary, pending arrival of emergency medical assistance.
6. Holster any involved handguns or secure them in place as evidence. Secure long guns in a safe manner or in place as evidence. Do not open, reload, remove shell casings, or in any manner tamper with involved firearms.
7. Take note of time. Survey the entire area for relevant facts, individuals who are present and who departed the scene, witnesses, potential suspects and suspect vehicles.
8. As time and capabilities permit, before supervisory and other assistance arrives:
 - a. Secure the area, establish a perimeter with crime scene tape and limit access to authorized persons necessary to investigate the shooting and assist the injured.

- b. Protect evidence from loss, destruction or damage that is likely to occur before backup can arrive. Ensure that evidentiary items are not moved or, if moved, note the original location and position of persons, weapons, and other relevant objects and evidence.
- c. Record the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all witnesses and other persons present at the shooting scene and request that they remain on hand in order to make a brief statement.

B. Supervisory Responsibilities at the Scene:

- 1. Ensure the safety and determine the condition of the officer(s), suspect(s), and third parties. Summon emergency medical service providers if not yet summoned for officer(s), suspect(s), and third parties.
- 2. If the officer has been shot or otherwise injured in the shooting:
 - a. Ensure that an officer accompanies and remains with the injured officer at the hospital.
 - b. Ensure that the officer's family is notified on a priority basis and in person when possible. Ensure that the family is assigned transportation to the hospital or other location where they are needed, as soon as possible.
 - c. Do not release the officer's name to the media or unauthorized parties without the approval of the Public Information Officer, and never prior to the family's notification.
 - d. If necessary, assign an officer to the family for security, support, control of the press and visitors, establishment of communications, and related matters.
 - e. Ensure that the clothing of officers and other injured persons is collected for potential evidentiary purposes and that related equipment of the officers is safeguarded.
- 3. If the officer is not injured, move him/her away from the center of activity, accompanied by another officer. Ensure that all necessary steps are taken consistent with this agency's policy on dealing with post-shooting trauma.
- 4. Confirm that the preliminary procedures described in section A have been adequately addressed and, if not, take appropriate action to ensure that necessary actions are taken.
- 5. Ensure that the immediate area is contained and detain any suspects therein.
- 6. Make notifications to other agency personnel, to include (not necessarily in this order):
 - a. Watch Commander;
 - b. Professional Standards Commander;
 - c. Crimes against Persons Investigators;
 - d. Chief of Police;
 - e. Public Information Officer;
 - f. Bureau Commanders;
 - g. Legal Advisor, if applicable (e.g., District Attorney's Office, City Attorney);
 - h. Coroner, if needed;

- i. Chaplain or Police Advocate;
 - j. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) representative.
7. Establish a command post if necessary.
 8. Appoint a recorder to make a chronological record of activities at the scene, to include persons present, actions taken by police personnel, and the identity of any personnel who entered the incident/crime scene, to include emergency medical and fire personnel.
 9. Notify a Crime Scene Investigator to come to the scene.
 10. Establish a media staging area as time permits unless a public information officer assumes this responsibility.
 11. Begin doing the following as soon as safety concerns allow:
 - a. Locate and secure (or secure in place) the officer's weapon(s) and ammunition casings. Check the weapons of all officers present for discharge.
 - b. Locate the suspect's weapon(s), ammunition and expended cartridges.
 - c. Collect information about the suspect, including name, physical description, domicile and other pertinent information.
 - d. Locate and secure as evidence any clothing that may have been removed from the suspect by emergency medical personnel or others.
 - e. Determine the original position of the officer(s) and the suspect at time of shooting.

C. Post-Shooting Trauma:

1. Supervisory, investigative and other sworn and non-sworn employees shall be familiar with and follow the provisions established by this agency in its policy on dealing with post-shooting emotional trauma in police personnel.
2. All personnel shall be familiar with the provisions of this agency's policy on the Employee Assistance Program and should avail themselves of these services following officer-involved shooting incidents where appropriate.

D. Investigator's Responsibility:

Investigation of officer-involved shootings shall be the responsibility of this agency's Internal Affairs Unit, or as designated by the Chief of Police. The lead investigator will be responsible for ensuring that the following tasks are adequately addressed in the order deemed necessary and appropriate.

1. Ensure that tasks itemized above in sections A and B of this policy have been appropriately and adequately completed. Take measures to ensure that any deficiencies in completing tasks are immediately remedied.
2. Receive a general briefing and walk-through by the supervisory officer regarding the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

3. Ensure that the overall scene and evidentiary items are photographed and videotaped. Videotape all persons present at the scene. Take color photographs of the officer as he/she appears at the scene, to include any injuries sustained.
4. Ensure thorough inspection of the scene and proper collection of all items and substances of evidentiary value.
5. Obtain taped statements from the suspects.
6. Ensure that notification is provided to next-of-kin of injured or deceased suspects.
7. Locate and identify witnesses and conduct initial tape-recorded interviews.
8. Tape record interviews with Fire Department personnel, emergency medical service providers and other first responders to the scene.
9. Conduct separate tape-recorded interviews with each officer involved.
 - a. Conduct the interview in a private location away from sight and hearing of agency members or others who do not have a need and/or right to the information.
 - b. Advise the officers not to discuss the incident with anyone except a personal or agency attorney or departmental investigator until the conclusion of the preliminary investigation.
 - c. Be cognizant of symptoms of post-traumatic stress, to include time and space distortions, confusion, hearing and visual distortion and emotional impairment, including shock. (Defer tape-recorded interviews if these symptoms are evident.)
10. Take any weapon fired by the officer(s) into custody and handle it as evidence. Firearms shall be taken from officers in a discrete manner and the investigator will advise the officer(s) that they will be returned or replaced at a later time.
11. In incidents where an officer has died, the investigator shall ensure that policy and procedures established by this agency for line-of-duty deaths and death notification are followed.
12. Investigators will contact the Coroner and attend autopsy of officer and/or suspect. Obtain evidence on the determined entrance and exit wounds, estimates of the shooter's position, the presence of controlled substances in the decedent's blood, or other related evidence.
13. Investigators may obtain search warrants as necessary for searches of vehicles, containers, and homes.
14. Develop a statement of preliminary basic facts for the media to be delivered by the Chief of Police, or Public Information Officer, with assistance from case investigators in conformance with this agency's policy on media relations.